

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER)

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HEREWITH FULL TEXT WASHINGTON STAR-NEWS LEAD EDITORIAL
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1974:

KISSINGER AND IMPEACHMENT

SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER SHOULD DROP ANY THOUGHT
OF QUITTING SHOULD PRESIDENT NIXON BE IMPEACHED BY THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. KISSINGER HAS NOT ANNOUNCED SUCH
A PLAN. BUT HE TALKED ABOUT IT WITH SOME CONGRESSMEN AS
BEING AMONG HIS OPTIONS IN THE EVENT OF IMPEACHMENT.

KISSINGER'S CONTEMPLATED RESIGNATION UNDER THE STATED
CIRCUMSTANCES, WHICH ASSUME MR. NIXON WOULD NOT RESIGN
FOLLOWING AN ADVERSE HOUSE VOTE, IS UNFORTUNATE. IT IS
BASED ON THE CONCLUSION THAT, IF AN IMPEACHMENT TRIAL OF
THE PRESIDENT BY THE SENATE BECAME CERTAIN, IT WOULD BE
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IMPOSSIBLE FOR KISSINGER TO CONDUCT AN EFFECTIVE FOREIGN

POLICY.

THE TROUBLE WITH A KISSINGER EXIT AT THAT POINT IS THAT FOREIGN POLICY COULD NOT JUST STOP FOR THE MONTHS IT WOULD TAKE TO OBTAIN A SENATE VERDICT. THE MOMENT OF THE HOUSE VOTE UNDOUBTEDLY WILL FIND KISSINGER DEEPLY INVOLVED

IN SEVERAL ON-GOING NEGOTIATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE AIMED AT ACHIEVING A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT AND FURTHERING DETENTE WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, BESIDES EFFORTS TO REVITALIZE RELATIONSHIPS WITH AMERICA'S ALLIES. INASMUCH AS PROGRESS IN SUCH MATTERS HAS BEEN BASED ON KISSINGER'S PERSONAL IMPACT ON FOREIGN LEADERS, AND UNOFFICIAL ON PARTLY DEVELOPED UNDERSTANDINGS, CONSIDERABLE GROUND COULD BE LOST BY THE SUDDEN LEAVING OF MR. NIXON'S TOP DIPLOMAT.

IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE, TOO, TO CONSIGN THE NATION'S FOREIGN POLICY TO FUTILITY DURING THE PERIOD OF SENATE CONSIDERATION OF IMPEACHMENT. THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN UNDER A DARK CLOUD BECAUSE OF THE WATERGATE SCANDAL FOR ALMOST A YEAR NOW, AND THE PRESIDENT'S STANDING IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS SUFFERED. BUT THIS HAS NOT RULED OUT THE CONTINUANCE OF A VERY RESPECTABLE RECORD IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DUE IN IMPORTANT MEASURE TO KISSINGER'S LABORS BUT ALSO TO THE FACT THAT MR. NIXON HAS NOT LOST SIGHT OF THE MAJOR WIDELY SHARED GOALS OF AMERICAN POLICY. AND HOWEVER THE IMPEACHMENT QUESTION SHADOWS THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION IN MONTHS TO COME, MUCH OF THE WORLD WANTS AND NEEDS TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE UNITED STATES ANYWAY.

KISSINGER, OF COURSE, HAS THE RIGHT TO STEP DOWN ANYTIME HE DECIDES TO DO SO. AS THE UNCHALLENGED STAR OF THE NIXON CABINET AND A MAN OF FORMIDABLE TALENT AND ENERGY HE IS VALUABLE. BUT NO ONE IS INDISPENSABLE IN THE AMERICAN SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT, WHICH TURNS OUT ITS PRESIDENTS AFTER A MAXIMUM OF TWO FULL TERMS. THE MAINSTREAM OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY ALSO TENDS TO FLOW ON DESPITE CHANGES AT THE TOP.

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IT WOULD BE REGRETTABLE, NEVERTHELESS, IF KISSINGER SHOULD LEAVE BECAUSE OF AN ERRONEOUS NOTION THAT HE COULD NOT SERVE EFFECTIVELY DURING AN IMPEACHMENT TRIAL. (END TEXT) SISCOE

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